

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6797

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS MONTREAL 1632

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, BGEN, CA

SUBJ: DELETION OF TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

REF: OTTAWA 3704, OCTOBER 1, 1975

1. ON OCTOBER 7, 1975, CONGEN OFFICER ATTENDED PUBLIC HEARING IN MONTREAL OF CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION COMMISSION. CRTC HEARD INTER ALIA APPLICATIONS OF NATIONAL CABLEVISION LIMITED (NCL) FOR RENEWAL OF LICENSES FOR CABLE TELEVISION UNDERTAKINGS SERVING PARTS OF MONTREAL, EXPIRING MARCH 31, 1976.

2. IN HIS PRESENTATION TO COMMISSION, NCL SPOKESMAN SAID HIS FIRM HAS OPPOSED AND CONTINUES TO OPPOSE CRTC POLICY ON DELETION OF COMMERCIALS FROM U.S. PROGRAMS CARRIED OVER CABLE TV. HE REQUESTED CRTC RECONSIDER THE POLICY, AT LEAST FOR QUEBEC PROVINCE WHERE, HE STRESSED, CONDITIONS DIFFER FROM THOSE IN REST OF CANADA. HE ALSO MENTIONED LEGAL RISKS INVOLVED AND COST TO CABLE OPERATORS OF IMPLEMENTING THE DELETION POLICY. HE TOLD CRTC THAT QUEBEC BROADCASTERS HAVE NOT PRESSED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY. THEY FEEL THAT THE ADVERTISING REVENUE LOST TO U.S. BORDER STATIONS IS NOT SIGNIFICANT AND WOULD NOT IN ANY EVENT BE RECOVERED BY THEM. QUEBEC FIRMS ADVERTISING OVER BORDER STATIONS ARE MOSTLY SMALL BUSINESSES, MANY OF WHOM, IN WORDS OF NCL SPOKESMAN, ARE NOT GOOD CREDIT RISKS, AND

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LOCAL BROADCASTERS FEEL MOST WOULD NOT PAY HIGHER COSTS TO

ADVERTISE IN QUEBEC. HE DID NOT MENTION POSSIBLE ADVERTISING REVENUE FROM U.S. FIRMS WISHING TO REACH CANADIAN MARKET. A FURTHER ARGUMENT AGAINST THE POLICY, NCL SPOKESMAN SAID, IS THAT MANY VIEWERS IN GREATER MONTREAL AREA CAN RECEIVE U.S. BORDER STATIONS DIRECTLY WITHOUT CABLE.

3. CONGEN OFFICER SPOKE WITH NCL SPOKESMAN FOLLOWING HIS PRESENTATION. HE SAID NCL HAS RECEIVED LETTERS FROM WPTZ IN PLATTSBURGH AND WCAX BURLINGTON STATING THEY WILL TAKE LEGAL ACTION IF NCL DELETES COMMERCIALS FROM THEIR PROGRAMS. NO SUCH NOTICE RECEIVED FROM WMTW POLAND SPRING, MAINE, THE THIRD COMMERCIAL BORDER STATION CARRIED OVER MONTREAL-AREA CABLE. HE SAID QUEBEC BROADCASTERS ESTIMATE SOME \$400 TO \$500 THOUSAND WORTH OF QUEBEC (MOSTLY MONTREAL AREA) ADVERTISING NOW CARRIED OVER BORDER STATIONS, REPRESENTING A LARGE NUMBER OF SMALL ACCOUNTS. ACCORDING TO SPOKESMAN, MOST OF THOSE FIRMS WOULD NOT ADVERTISE OVER QUEBEC TV STATIONS BECAUSE COST OF A TV COMMERCIAL ON U.S. STATIONS VIEWED HERE IS ABOUT THE SAME AS COST OF A RADIO SPOT IN QUEBEC.

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